The written recast as a technique to help pre-community college English Language Learners notice the gap and take ownership of the writing process

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A short overview of theoretical approaches to language development

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research for the last 30 years has been assessing which responses to learner language effectively assist learners toward target-like language and which do not. Recommended approaches have varied widely, swinging pendulum fashion from highly interventionist to non-interventionist approaches. A short synopsis of some of the last installments of the search might begin with The Natural Approach connected in many people's minds with the name of Krashen, whose writings from the early 80s cautioned language teachers away from grammar teaching in the name of 'acquisition', the term chosen to represent unconscious learning (Krashen 1982, 1985). The emphasis was on access to comprehensible input. Exposure to language was deemed to be the primary route to effective language learning and explicit instruction of language forms was avoided.

The typical language use of students from French immersion contexts, who had had plenty of exposure to comprehensible input, yet routinely used non-target-like language structures, posed a strong challenge to the input-only focus of the Krashen era and triggered a look at the additional importance of output in assisting students develop accuracy as well as fluency in their language use.

Swain (1985) compared results on a variety of grammatical, discourse and sociolinguistic measures of the language of middle schoolers in a French immersion setting and native French speaking middle-school children. She identified the apparent

lack of productive use of French within the immersion context as the main source behind the notable difference in accuracy. She framed the concept identified by the term "pushed output" referring to the need of a learner to be "pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately" (Swain, 1985, p. 249). As awareness grew that grammatical accuracy could not be assumed to develop from input alone, a broad spate of questions opened up as to what means of intervention, at what times and addressing which linguistic features might be effective in moving students toward accurate production.

Schmidt examined the question of how interlanguage develops towards accurate target language under both a personal and professional lens through a diary study (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Schmidt kept meticulous notes tracking his own interlanguage development while learning Portuguese, which Frota, a native Portuguese linguist, examined. She closely analyzed which structures were mastered in light of which language structures he had been exposed to, which he had been instructed in and which he practiced. The study highlights not only Schmidt's progress, but also his lack thereof in certain areas of accuracy. Of note were the linguistic features, which he regularly used incorrectly despite a clear presence in the input of the correct uses. Schmidt recognized that the crucial fulcrum between accurate and inaccurate use lay at the juncture of noticing the difference. The term "noticing the gap" came into prominence as the SLA research community honed in on the importance of understanding how to guide students toward this significant learning moment.

Cognitive Comparison

Ellis (1995) upgraded the "noticing the gap" terminology to the phrase, "cognitive comparison" explaining, "this term better captures the fact that learners need to notice

when their own output is the same as the input as well as when it is different" (p. 90). Thus when learners compare what they notice in the input with what they currently produce in their own output it helps students develop a hypothesis regarding whether a target language structure is the correct one. "In other words, cognitive comparisons serve as a mechanism for disconfirming or confirming hypotheses in implicit knowledge" (p. 90). Ellis thus recommends the teaching of linguistic features in such a way that learners can focus on recognizing them in input prior to a focus on correct production. He uses the term interpretation tasks to refer to the process by which learners try to understand input and in the process pay attention to specific linguistic features and notice the ways in which they are used to create meaning.

Ellis cuts through the distinction between input vs. output tasks, by recommending ways to link the two stages of language processing. He cites VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) and Tuz (1992), studies which compared traditional production oriented practice with listening practice in which learners processed specially contrived input. Learners who worked with the input based model outperformed control groups in both comprehension and production. On the strength of their insights into the apparently potent role of input processing, Ellis recommends the structuring of what he labels interpretation tasks, activities which promote the move from input processing to integration of intake with output tasks. In the design of these tasks, Ellis recommends processing of target structure through an interpretation activity consisting of a stimulus, either spoken or written, requiring a non-verbal or minimal response such as checking a box or selecting a picture. He recommends a sequencing of attention going from meaning to noticing of form and function to error identification, adding that interpretation

tasks require a personal response and that students should be provided with immediate and explicit feedback on the correctness of their responses.

Recast Studies

With the raised awareness of the role of noticing in SLA, one of the goals of SLA research became identifying which techniques may or may not promote learner noticing and subsequent acquisition. A number of studies developed to study the relationship of corrective feedback and students' subsequent responses to such feedback. Lyster and Ranta (1997) conducted an extensive cataloging of teacher response to both well and ill formed utterances. They also quantified what they called student uptake: different types of student responses immediately following feedback. Their aim was to describe and quantify patterns of error treatment in teacher-student interaction in order to try to recognize feedback which induced positive response from students and that which did not. They cataloged 50 hours of transcripts gathered from six French immersion elementary classrooms known to be particularly interactive. They found overall that student uptake followed about half of the feedback moves and that this uptake was evenly divided between utterances that were repaired or those that remained in need. The other half of the feedback moves provided no opportunity for uptake. The Lyster & Ranta research played a key role in the identification of the term, '*recast';* a feedback move in which the teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of the student's utterance without the error. Recasts turned out to account for more than half of teacher's corrective responses. By showing how the correct forms provided as positive input are not necessarily noticed or recognized, Lyster's recast analysis sheds light on the important role of providing negative feedback to help students know when their utterances are non-target-like.

Lyster (1998) analyzes further through a qualitative description how recasts may often give ambiguous messages to students; they can confirm the meaning or disconfirm the form. "Recasts do not necessarily disconfirm wrong hypotheses because they compete with the student's own nontarget output serving as auto-input as well as with nontarget input from peers, both of which may be followed by approving and confirming moves from teachers" (Lyster, 1998 p. 63). Lyster proposes some concrete alternatives that teachers can use in place of traditional recasts. These alternatives provide learners with signals that a repair is needed, as opposed to doing the repair for the students. As students recognize the need for repair, they are given opportunity to notice their error, yet are themselves responsible to repair it. Lyster labels this type of feedback as '*negotiation of form*' as a category distinct from '*negotiation of meaning*'.

Doughty and Varela (1998) documented the effectiveness of these '*negotiation of form'* feedback techniques in a classroom context. Their goal was to identify a classroom which used a systematic way to focus on form within the context of meaning focused lessons, as opposed to the more incidental focusing on form that occurred within the Lyster (1998) study. They worked with middle school Science teachers to identify language necessary to correctly fill out lab reports required for the class. They then trained teachers in the use of what they termed '*corrective recasting'* a teacher feedback move which involves an initial attention-getting phase to draw attention to the error, prior to actually giving the linguistic feedback. Teachers focused on using intonation, elicitation and clarification requests to help students recognize the need for focus on form. Doughty and Varela (1998) found that learners in the group receiving deliberate

corrective recasting improved in both accuracy and total number of attempts at past time reference, particularly in the oral reporting of the science labs.

To further the debate about which types of feedback may actually impact students' ability to learn, Mackey, Gass and McDonough (2000) performed a study to determine whether feedback is accurately perceived by students and whether feedback given by teachers is recognized for its intended purposes. They worked with university beginning level ESL and Italian Foreign language learners who each carried out a communicative task with an interviewer. The interaction sessions were videotaped. Interviews provided interactional feedback when the participants produced a nontarget-like utterance, in such a way as to not interfere with the communicative nature of the task. Immediately following, another researcher viewed the videotape with the learner for a stimulated recall, which elicited the learners' original perceptions about the feedback episodes. For the ESL learners the majority of the feedback episodes were categorized as morphosyntactic (53%), however, they only recognized the feedback as morphosyntactic 13% of the time. 38% of the time the feedback was perceived as semantic. For IFL learners 31.5% of the feedback was morphosyntactic, and it was perceived as such only 25% of the time. Lexical and phonological feedback was much more commonly perceived correctly. The researchers postulate that perhaps students do not notice morphosyntactic feedback because it is less important to communicative ability than either phonological or lexical feedback.

Noticing Research in Review

A brief review of the noticing strand of SLA research shows that researchers moved from the initial assumption that correct forms will be produced if a learner is exposed to them, to a realization that explicit guidance is necessary to develop accuracy in language. The concept of noticing became the key to recognizing how students gained access to the learning potential of linguistic features available in input. This led to the development of interpretation task based learning in which students were guided in comparing their own language to the target language. As teachers and researchers thought about techniques commonly used to facilitate such noticing for learners, they became aware that the common teacher response of oral recasting of errors is often ambiguous for students. The present research examines whether a recast in the written form might lead to more successful uptake of morphosyntactic form for learners.

One of the major disadvantages that seems to arise regarding oral recasts is that students simply do not have time to respond. Because oral recasts are often incorporated into meaning focused learning contexts, the focus to meaning reverts before the student is given an opportunity for uptake. For example in a classroom context the teacher often proceeds with the meaning focus of a lesson after recasting a student, leaving no chance for the student to incorporate the feedback on language form. The cognitive overload of the communicative moment simply does not allow for time for focus on form. The written context may provide more time for students' noticing and uptake of recast language.

Reformulation

Reformulation refers to the rewriting of an L2 learner's composition, or some portion thereof, such that the content the learner provides in the original draft is maintained, but its awkwardness, rhetorical inadequacy, ambiguity, logical confusion, style, lexical inadequacy and grammatical errors are tidied up. Levenston came up with the term 'reformulation' in his attempt to develop a writing feedback technique for native speakers whose writing may be grammatically and mechanically correct, yet still lack the high level lexical development and style considerations representative of truly excellent writing. He proposed a two stage process which "(distinguishes) a first stage of reconstruction, aimed at removing "goofs," and a further stage of reformulation, aimed at improving the style and clarifying the thought" (Levenston, 1978 p. 11).

Levenston developed this feedback technique as a two part process that began with plausible reconstruction in which another person fixed up the surface errors, approximating as closely as possible the meaning in grammatically correct form. This plausible reconstruction was then passed on to a different reformulator. Plausible reconstruction and reformulation differ by the degree to which they alter the original student's text. Data from the current research illustrates the difference between the two stages of response. The original text reads,*" When I was young I used to live with my Parent We have our own home we are two girl and two boys. We are so young I was a middle one, one is my oldest and two is my youngest*" might in the plausible reconstruction look like, "*When I was young we used to live with our parents. We had our own home. There were two girls and two boys in our family. We were very young. I was the middle child, one sibling was older and two were younger*," whereas a

reformulation would more likely read like, "*When I was young we used to live with our parents. There were four children in our family. I had an older sister and two younger brothers*." The plausible reconstruction fixes grammar within constructions that might never be put together by a native speaker. Reformulation focuses on style to help learners recognize, not just correct modes of expression, but to become familiar with culturally typical choices such as organization, vocabulary and typical patterns of expression used for example in particular speech acts such as introductions, transitions, apologies or explanations.

In reformulation a native or native-like speaker reads a student's writing, reflects on what the student is likely trying to say and puts it into words as a native speaker would express it. Reformulation provides the input of well-formulated language in a personally relevant format by showing students how to represent their own ideas clearly in native like speech. In so doing, reformulation is a writing response technique that erases the dichotomy between learning from availability in input versus learning from direct correction. Students' errors have been acknowledged, but their input focus is on whole segments of contextualized native like speech as opposed to isolated language chunks as with traditional red penning.

Cohen (1990) recognized the potential in the reformulation technique for the second language context because of the particular linguistic restraints experienced by non-native speakers. "When non-natives go about composing text, they often rely on forms which they feel confident with. …When teachers provide feedback, their comments generally relate only to the language forms that you chose to use. Thus, you do not get feedback regarding alternative, possibly richer avenues for expressing your

ideas. Reformulation is a means for providing this potentially enriching input." Cohen conducted preliminary research on the technique by comparing essays which advanced ESL students had revised in response to traditional red-pen feedback, with reformulated versions of the essay. He then did close-order comparisons of the revised student essay and the reformulation, finding that the reformulation exercise added a dimension of feedback traditionally lacking by its ability to "point up major deviations from native like writing in the writing of nonnative students—deviations which if overlooked could well lead to significant fossilization" (Cohen, 1983, cited in Cohen 1990 p.175). Cohen (1983a) followed up with a small-scale study by having his own Hebrew writing reformulated by three separate reformulators. He demonstrated the potential of pointing up important matters of vocabulary and syntax that are often not addressed in traditional teacher feedback. Cohen (1983b) conducted a follow-up study with thirteen English as a Foreign Language and Hebrew as Second Language learners at the university level. He compared their responses to traditional feedback and reformulated feedback showing a general positive response on an affective level in which there was general acknowledgement that reformulation gave feedback on a deeper level which brought out the richness, variety and subtleties of the language.

Sanaoui (1984) observed and noted changes to French as a Second Language student papers in response to reformulation. She identified categories where instances of change were observed and the percentage of students who made such changes. She observed a great increase in quality related to significant lexical improvements as well as sensitization to appropriateness and register. "Students acquired new and more complex structures which allow them to express and combine a greater number of ideas per

sentence rather than produce a series of simple statements. As well, they employed markers of cohesion" (Sanaoui, 1984 p. 142). She also catalogued noticeable differences between better and poorer writers in their capacity to benefit from the technique. She notes that better writers incorporated more new elements and tended to use new structures in a variety of appropriate ways whereas poorer writers progress tended to be limited to two areas, the syntactic and lexical.

Cohen (1989) conducted a larger scale follow up study with 52 advanced Hebrew as a Second Language learners to investigate the benefits of reformulation over a more extended period, with results from two groups, one responding to reformulated work and one responding to corrected work. This study found a high level of burnout and some dissatisfaction upon repeated exposure to reformulation; however, it should be noted that this burnout appeared to be attributable to the fact that a greater burden of responsibility and work fell upon the reformulation group than on the corrections group because students were responsible for finding their own reformulators and for making extra revisions at the plausible reconstruction stage. Thus the dissatisfaction should not be traced to ability to learn from reformulation, but rather to an increased workload in the study design.

Both Cohen and Sanaoui emphasize the advantages of reformulation for advanced level students. However these recommendations appear to be based on the goals for which they used reformulation. Cohen and Sanaoui envisioned reformulation as a tool to focus on such aspects as cohesion, style and increasing lexical ability, which are logical goals for the advanced level students. There were not, however, controlled studies that showed that lower level students did not benefit or benefited minimally. The

recommendations for advanced level students state that these students for whom those goals were appropriate were able to benefit in the way in which those who assigned them the tasks had envisioned. The recommendations for advanced level students do not appear to be non-recommendations for lower level students. Lower level students who may, in fact, have opportunities to benefit from the technique at their own level for the particular linguistic features they are ready to develop. It is particularly notable that in Sanaoui (1984) poorer writers exposed to the reformulation technique showed the capacity to improve their use of syntactic and lexical items; these may well be exactly the items they need to acquire at their level. It appears that Sanaoui's lower level learners were prepared to benefit from the changes in the plausible reconstruction, but not yet ready to recognize some of the higher level changes that occurred at the reformulation stage.

The current research identifies ways to make the advantages of reformulation accessible to lower level learners. I will use the broader term '*written recast'* to mean reformulation geared to the proficiency level of the learner. For some students the feedback will resemble plausible reconstruction, whereas for others feedback will approximate reformulation. In some cases it may be a hybrid between the two, taking out the most glaring non-native usages, but not quite reaching the true native speaking style. The more general term 'written recast' makes accessible the advantages found to exist for reformulation to learners at all levels by targeting language features developmentally appropriate for a given learner. An instructor has the latitude to adapt the level of the recast to the perceived level of the learner. (For advanced learners, recasting directly into the reformulation form, while skipping the distinct stage of plausible reconstruction may

also help prevent the burnout factor documented by Cohen (1989) in using the two-staged process.)

Ferris (1999) recommends selective correction as an approach to student writing in which the instructor focuses on one or two language features, ignoring other mistakes so as not to overwhelm the students with cognitive overload. Feedback from the written recast may also provide this same benefit, but the student instead of the teacher chooses the language features to focus on. The student accesses the teacher feedback by engaging in the cognitive comparison recommended by Ellis (1995) where the learners must notice a linguistic entity in the target language input before comparing it with their own interlanguage version of it. The student is given the opportunity to study native language input in a personally relevant context and recognize the gaps between the input and his or her own related output. As a reactive approach to student writing, the written recast meets learners where their interlanguage development is and helps them say what they already wanted to say more accurately, thus filling a communicative gap.

Advantages of the written recast as a feedback mechanism include, first of all that relevant target language structures are provided appropriate to the context of what the learner wishes to express; the learner is able to appropriate from these relevant forms according to his/her own needs and interests; and a balance is provided between focus on meaning and focus on form. A good written recast postulates more sophisticated meanings than students are able to independently express and simultaneously models the forms necessary to express those meanings. The written recast is in essence an extended confirmation check on the part of the person who provides that recast. The exchange of texts between learner and instructor is an active conversation about relevant meaning and

brings about the potential for learning latent in negotiation of meaning. The written recast also erases the distinction between benefits of positive and negative evidence by functioning in both roles simultaneously. The written recast provides not only solid pedagogic experience for learners, but forms an excellent context to study noticing and students' capacity for error recognition and learning from errors.

Gilbert (1996) focused on the effect of reformulation for a lower-intermediate level learner through a diary study that explored among other issues the motivational potential of reformulation as a learning tool. She studied herself as a subject and worked with three different reformulators on a series of writings in different mediums to gain insights into the ways different reformulators might affect a student's learning capacity with regard to the technique. She affirms the strength that reformulation holds for herself as a low intermediate learning noting that it provided valuable 'voice training' especially at the lower levels where a learner may not be in control of the language enough to have developed a distinctive personal voice in the second language." She also acknowledged the role that reformulation can play in helping a non-native speaker to claim the writing process by opening up the possibilities of multiple ways in which an idea might be expressed and to find the capacity to express one's self within the foreign language.

Versaw (2001) investigated the use of reformulation with advanced level ELL composition students to determine the effect of reformulation on students' ability to improve their writing with a focus on students' own attitudes about the usefulness of the assignment. She incorporated a peer review process in which pairs of peers analyzed the changes made by the reformulators in each of their essays. Many students felt that the exercise helped them in the acquisition of more native-like style in particular in the areas

of vocabulary use and syntax and grammar change. Seventeen out of twenty reports reflected a positive attitude about learning from reformulation, although some students expressed concerns about being overwhelmed by the quantity of changes made.

Qi and Lapkin (2001) investigated more closely the difference in response to learning from reformulation between a lower and a higher-level learner. They examined noticing during a reformulation task and its impact on subsequent output. Their methodology involved using videotaped think aloud protocols at two stages: 1) during the initial composing and 2) during comparison of reformulated version of their writing to the original draft. Each of these stages was followed by a retrospective interview. In the first stage students were asked to comment on places they had gotten stuck in their own composing and where they had questions about their own writing. In the second stage, students were asked to explain what they were reacting to as they read the reformulated version. It was in this stage that researchers had a view of the quality of the student's noticing, such as whether the student was able to articulate grammatically what the difference was. In a third phase of the project students were given a post test four days later in which they were given a retyped version of their original draft and asked to make corrections, to see how much was retained from the noticing and retrospection. Qi and Lapkin found that noticing of reformulations was higher around issues about which the students had themselves had questions prior to seeing the reformulations and concluded that language-related noticing may contribute to the improvement of L2 writing. They noted that the quality of noticing was notably lower with a lower proficiency student and that this was a directly correlated with less ability to transfer noticed corrections to a subsequent draft. In their conclusion they state, "the teacher may need to train learners,

especially those with a lower level of L2 proficiency, how to notice the gap between their own draft text and the reformulated text. This may mean that the teacher may need to organize some awareness-raising activities in reformulation tasks" (p. 296). They conclude their study saying**, "**How to improve noticing quality especially for learners with a lower level of L2 proficiency may be a crucial issue to be addressed in L2 pedagogy".

Rationale for Study

It is here that the current study is located. The Qi and Lapkin (2001) study establishes the relationship between noticing and retention, noting the lack of quality noticing by a lower level learner. The current study takes up the suggestion of assisting lower level learners through providing tasks, as suggested, to promote the incidence and the quality of noticing. One task was recording differences between their original text and the recast version of the text through transcriptions of the changes onto their own initial draft. Secondly, students were asked to record on a reflective statement what patterns of difference they noticed. The assumption is that the change had been noticed when the student made the correction on the next draft. The extent to which students were able to transcribe errors and subsequently locate related errors in other samples of their writing provide a window onto what types of feedback were noticed and retained. The recast process filters out feedback that might consistently not be noticed by a given group of students, thereby providing guidance to instructors as to which types of feedback may be the most effective investment of their time.

Qi and Lapkin addressed the question of which feedback students retained by providing their subjects an unanticipated opportunity to correct their original essays four

days after viewing the reformulations. It appears that students did not have access to the reformulations at the time of the task. While the study looked at retention over time, this task appears not to have provided students the benefit of access to the reformulation as a continued source of relevant input. In other words, even if students did not have the opportunity to memorize the new forms modeled, their knowledge that the new forms exist, can refer them back to the models as continued input.

The current study allows students access to the recast text at the time of evaluation and looks at whether students are able to transfer what they learned into another writing context. The second phase of the current study asks students to reread the non-reformulated second half of their own essays and see whether any of the differences noted between their own draft and its reformulated version caused them to make changes to their writing. Students immediately have an opportunity to apply the input from their rewritten texts to editing more of their own writing, thus putting input processing and output into a related cognitive interaction. Students benefit not only from the cognitive comparison, but also from pushed output in which they are able to cement their understanding of language characteristics through being required to use them (Swain, 1995). The task devised for students thus places in close relationship the noticing and the output stages of language development.

The current study was undertaken in two parts, a pilot study and a main study. The pilot study addressed the following research questions:

Research Question #1: What written recasts of non-target-like items are pre-community college students able to notice in a two phased writing project, as measured by their ability to transfer the recast items into their initial drafts?

Research Question #2: Which student transcribed changes are students able to apply to the second half of the same essay?

Pilot Study Methodology

Participants

All students in the study were enrolled in a pre-community college class of which the researcher was the instructor. All students had a high school degree or equivalent from either an American high school or one in their own country. Each planned to enroll in community college, but had failed to achieve a passing score on the Comparative English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA)[i] reading test and was subsequently enrolled in a 15 hour a week Adult Basic Education (ABE) program designed to improve reading and writing skills sufficiently to pass the entrance exam into the community college. This class had a 3-hour a week section devoted to writing in which students were grouped by ability. Students whose spelling and basic grammar needs were so large as to interfere with reading comprehensibility were placed in a different class to focus on those basic skills. Their needs were not addressed by this study. Although many still struggled with basic grammar and sentence formation, all participants in the study showed in their work a capacity to focus on organization of their writing as well. (Two of the pilot study students, Lul and Safia, also participated in the main study.)

Out of an enrollment of 18 students in the class, 12 completed all the stages of pre-writing, drafting, recasting, transcribing and recorrecting under the timeline necessary to have their work included in the study. Table 1 lists participants with culturally appropriate pseudonyms according to nationality, gender and estimated age. Of these 12 students, 9 were from Somalia, 2 from Oromia, and 1 from the Ukraine. There were 8 women and 4 men. Students were primarily in their early twenties. In general the students' oral skills far outpaced their literacy skills. All participants signed an informed consent form prior to participation.

Table 1: Pilot Study Participants

Name	Country/Region Of Origin	Gender	Estimated Age
Ursula	Ukraine	F	25-30
Lul	Somalia	F	20-25
Safia	Somalia	F	20-25
Alia	Somalia	F	20-25
Mariam	Oromia	F	20-25
Ahmed	Somalia	F	20-25
Halima	Somalia	F	25-30
Gabriel	Oromia	M	25-30
Abdirizak	Somalia	M	20-25
Faduma	Somalia	F	20-25
Basim	Somalia	M	25-30
Estella	Somalia	F	20-25

The teacher/reformulator is a certified teacher at the elementary level with 13 years of teaching experience, four of which are in the current Adult Basic Education, pre-community college context. Her second language teaching experience also includes teaching Spanish as a foreign language as well as teaching in a Spanish immersion program at the elementary level. She is currently enrolled in an M.A. program at the University of Minnesota. She has focused her professional development on the teaching of writing and providing effective feedback to writing throughout her career.

Pilot Study Procedure:

The task involved a three phase drafting sequence, described below and summarized in Table 2.

Phase 1

Step 1. Students wrote a personal narrative in response to the prompt, " How has your life changed since coming to this country? What things are different and which things have stayed the same? You might talk about job responsibilities, family responsibilities, living situations, and education. How have you changed to adapt to living in America?"

Step 2. Students received feedback on content from the instructor. No corrective feedback was given. Instead the instructor wrote questions eliciting additional information in the margins of individual student's work or made suggestions of details to expand on. In conjunction with this, samples of student writing in response to the question were provided. Class discussion focused on what worked well in these models and on what might be added or rearranged to make the stories more interesting or easier to follow.

Step 3. Students were then given class time to revise in response to this feedback.

Step 4. Students received models of effective introductions and conclusions and assistance in outlining a more extended essay on the topics. The subsequent drafts were begun during class time, but most students primarily completed them outside of class. Students' requests for grammar and other corrective feedback were responded to by promises that feedback would be given, but that their writing was not yet ready for it. Their task was to create an essay that truly said what they wanted to say in response to

the prompt. The instructor informed students that when the ideas themselves were fully developed the essay would be worthy of the attention of correcting surface details.

Step 5. The researcher then made a written recast of the first half of everyone's essay. Each recast was headed by a comment from the instructor on the positive qualities noted in the writing. See Appendix A for student essay, reformulation and rewrite.

The written recasts used in this particular context more closely approximated plausible reconstruction than a style-focused reformulation. Sequencing of sentences was for the most part preserved, such that students could follow one sentence at a time and focus on morphosyntactic, mechanical and lexical changes on a sentential level, as opposed to focusing on paragraph organization. For example, a text that read, "*When I was my countries I start to goes to school about 8 years old. I goes to school in Ethiopia until 1997. When I lives Ethiopia my work was goes to school come back home played with neighbors, friend and did my homework,"* was rewritten as, "*When I was in my country I started to go to school when I was about 8 years old. I went to school in Ethiopia until 1997. My only work was going to school. Then I came back home and played with my neighbors and friends and did my homework."*

Step 6. Prior to returning the written recasts, a cover sheet was provided modeling the process of transcribing the changes from the recast onto an original draft and giving students the opportunity to practice noticing gaps between two versions. See Appendix B.

Phase 2

Step 7. Students transcribed changes from the written recast onto a copy of their own writing. Students were also given a feedback form asking them about patterns they

noticed in the feedback they had received. The transcriptions were collected and photocopied.

Phase 3

Step 8. Transcriptions were returned the following day. Students were asked to reread the second half of the essays in light of the feedback they had received on the first and to evaluate whether they could identify any changes they might make.

Table 2: Steps of three stage drafting sequence used by student and teacher.

Phase	Step	Description
1. Drafting	1	Students wrote a personal narrative in response to a prompt.
	2	Students received non-corrective feedback from the instructor that focused on eliciting additional information. Students were provided models in class of effective responses and class discussion focused on what worked well in these models
	3	Students were given class time to begin revisions in response to this feedback. Most finished revisions out of class.
	4	Introductions and conclusions modeled.
	5	Researcher recast the first half of everyone's essay.
	6	Transcription process practiced in a non-personal context
2. Noticing	7	Students transcribed changes from the recast onto a copy of their own writing.
3.Application	8	Transcriptions were returned the following day. Students were asked to reread the second half of the essays in light of the feedback they had received on the first and to evaluate whether they could identify any changes they might make.

Pilot Study Data analysis

Changes made by both the researcher and by students were classified into four categories of correction types. These types were adapted from the four error types, phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical and semantic used by Mackey, Gass and McDonough (2000) in their classifications of recasts. Their phonological category was transformed to a category of mechanical errors, due to the differences between the writing and speaking modalities. Table 3 summarizes the correction categories used to

classify the changes made by both the researcher during recasting and also changes made by students during Phase 3 of the project in response to recasting. In the semantic category some changes are made which are not necessarily corrections, but rather clarifications. These are labeled as changes.

Table 3: Correction Categories

Correction category	**Types of corrections included**
Mechanical	punctuation, capitalization, spelling
Morphosyntactic.	singular/plural, article use, verb tense changes and third person markers
Lexical	addition or deletion of words, not including auxiliaries added in verb tense changes
Semantic	word order or reorganization or restatement to clarify meaning

1) Mechanical corrections include punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Lack of a period at the end of a sentence and lack of capitalization at the beginning of the next sentence were counted as one correction.

Table 4: Mechanical Corrections

Student Writing	**Recast**	**Category**	**Type**
doughter	**daughter**	mechanical	spelling
many things are different for me one thing is the weather	many things are different for me**. One** thing is the weather	mechanical	Capitalization punctuation

2) Morphosyntactic level corrections include singular/plural distinction, article use, verb tense changes and third person markers. Word form changes to mark different parts of speech such as the difference between '*shame*' and '*shameful*' were also counted here. Table 5 illustrates several morphosyntactic corrections.

Table 5: Morphosyntactic Corrections

Student Writing	**Recast**	**Category**	**Type**
They watching me every step I take	They **watched** every step **I took**	Morpho syntactic	Verb forms

I appreciation her help.	I **appreciate** her help.	Morpho syntactic	Parts of Speech
She have two child	She **has** two **children.**	Morpho syntactic	Singular/plural

3) Lexical level corrections include addition or deletion of words, not including auxiliaries added in verb tense changes, which were counted as morphosyntactic. Table 6 illustrates lexical additions, changes and deletions.

Table 6: Lexical Corrections

Student Writing	**Recast**	**Category**	**Type**
They took me to school in Arabic, and Somalia everyday	They took me to **both** an Arabic and Somali school everyday.	lexical	addition
If I will be	**When** I was	lexical	change
So that life was so difficult life to me.	That life was difficult for me.	lexical	deletion

4) Semantic level changes include word order changes and reorganization or restatement to clarify meaning and additions of entire clauses or sentences. Examples of semantic change are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Semantic Changes

Student Writing	**Recast**	**Category**	**Type**
Take me from the school after class and they give me more exercise after school	They walked me back and forth and then gave me additional homework at home	Semantic	Restatements.
If you want to go to every state	You can travel to any state by plane, train or car	semantic	addition
It lives in America	(*omit phrase)*	semantic	deletion

Where multiple corrections occurred within a single sentence, each correction in the sentence was tallied individually as illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8: Categorization of multiple corrections in one sentence.

Student Writing	**Recast**	**Category**
The things that stayed same.	**One of the things** that has stayed the same	lexical
The things that stayed	One of the things that **has** stayed the	morphosyntactic

same.	same	
The things that stayed same.	One of the things that has stayed **the** same	morphosyntactic

If morphosyntactic or lexical corrections were made within the context of a semantic change, only the semantic change was counted, such as illustrated by the examples in Table 9.

Table 9: Semantic changes containing other corrections

Student Writing	**Recast**	**Category**
Maybe **the** family which can be three people	Even within **a** family of three people,	semantic
They have each their own car.	each **one** has their own car.	semantic

There are some potential gray areas in categorizing feedback. Some spelling errors are remarkably similar in nature to morphosyntactic errors, both representing occasionally the change of a single letter in a word. Spelling has been included among mechanical errors, to distinguish phonetic misunderstandings from grammatical ones. Errors such as *grocery* instead of *groceries* are counted as morphosyntactic, whereas *grocerys* is categorized as a spelling error. Semantic level changes include deletions, additions or order changes that were made to clarify meaning. A change such as the word *adapt* instead of the word *adopt* might technically be seen as a lexical change, but in this context it is treated as a mechanical error due to the lack of perceptual salience of the difference between the two lexical items. Although the difference between *from* and *for* might be seen as mechanical it is counted here as a lexical item.

Pilot Study Results

Research Question #1:What written recasts of non-target-like items are pre-community college students able to notice in a two phased writing project, as measured by their ability to transfer the recast items into their initial drafts?

In examining which edits from recast text (the first half of their essays) students transferred into their own writing, the pilot study found a low percentage of transcription of mechanical errors compared to the higher percentage of transcription of morphosyntactic, lexical and semantic errors. Table 10 indicates how many corrections of each type the researcher made in recasting the writing of the 12 participants and which percentage of those corrections students transcribed. Roughly similar amounts of each type of corrections were made by the researcher/teacher. There were 93 mechanical corrections, 117 morphosyntactic corrections, 135 lexical corrections and 112 semantic corrections. The kinds of corrections that students transcribed onto their own papers as they read the recasts showed more variation. Students in rewriting the first half of their essays transcribed 65% of the researcher's morphosyntactic corrections, 81% of her lexical corrections and 50% of her semantic corrections. However students transcribed only 22% of her mechanical changes. (See Table 10)

Table 10: Percentage of teacher corrections in recast text adopted by students in the first half of their original texts.
(Phase 2: Noticing).

Mechanical Corrections	Morphsyntactic Corrections	Lexical Corrections	Semantic Corrections
(21/93) 22%	(76/117) 65%	(110/135) 81%	(56/112) 50%

The low percentage of mechanical errors which students transcribed onto their own papers might imply that mechanical errors may be difficult for students to perceive and

that more highlighting of error is necessary than the format of recasting allows to teach students to notice mechanical error.

Research Question #2: Which student transcribed changes are students able to apply to the second half of the same essay?

This pilot study identified four patterns of response to the Phase 3 task of applying insights gained from the written recast to the second half of the essay. Student groups 1 and 2 could be characterized by their ability to recognize patterns of error and make corrections to related errors. They are distinguished from each other by the degree to which students were able to use the feedback they received to edit their own writing in the second half of their papers. Groups 3 and 4 are characterized by lack of ability to use feedback in the second half of the paper and are distinguished from each other by the researcher's understanding of the reasons for this lack.

Group 1 consists of 5 students, (42%) who completed all stages of the project. All students in the group were able to make several positive changes to their own writing of the second half of the essay as a result of studying the reformulations of the first half. These changes resulted in either target-like or more target-like use of written English or represented an increased comfort with the revision process itself. For three of the five students in Group 1 their changes involved a focus on one type of correction. Safia appropriately changed 'get used to' and 'got used to' to 'have gotten used to' three times in her essay, essentially correcting remaining tense issues in that segment of writing. Safia wrote

(1) People just get used to it → People have gotten used to it.
(2) I just get used to it → I just have getten
(3) I got used the life of Americans→ I have gotten used to it.

Alia transcribed almost none of the feedback which she was given which included spelling, mechanics, additional lexicon and some major reorganizational rewrites of some of her phrases. She transcribed only 3 out of 21 edits, 2 of which were changes in verb tense and the other was an underlined acknowledgment that a phrase had been restructured. In examining her work during Phase 3 however it is clear that there was something about the punctuation which she did notice for she had added five additional periods. Alia wrote,

> (4)After winter is gone I started work to get money to buy a car and be independent. About the bus but the bad thing is that I can't be independent about the weather…

Upon looking at her work more closely with the instructor, she recognized that in fact not all these additional periods were correct. She was able to describe her thought process using phrases such as, "*I think no period. I think no period because 'and' goes with the whole sentence still going on."* Item (5) reflects one such change upon recontemplating the issue.

> (5)After winter is gone I started work to get money to buy a car and be independent about the bus. But the bad thing is that I can't be independent about the weather…

Alia was able to notice patterns about clauses and sentences and immediately put them to use in proofreading her own writing. It appears that by over adding periods that she helped herself develop an editing process whereby she could recognize whether her punctuation actually made sense.

The types of changes made by Lul and Ahmed did not necessarily represent the pattern of systematic change represented by the others. In a similar manner to Alia, Lul added 2 periods although none were transcribed in Phase 2. She changed the phrase, *I*

have become a responsible ' meaning, *I have become responsible* to say *I have become a responsibilit*y. She appeared to take her cue from 'responsibility' following 'a' in the recast, which is an example of how increased awareness of different word forms can initially move a student farther from target-like writing.

Halima was a student so enthusiastic about the assignment and about improving her own writing that she often spoke with the instructor after class, asking questions and generating additional drafts between those assigned, making her an example of someone for whom the assignment elicited positive response, but also making her a difficult informant to tally in a research study. The nature of the improvements of her writing was generally an addition or simply a change of semantic items and a general lack of awareness of mechanical or morphosyntactic difference. Items (6) and (7) illustrate Halima's different takes of communicating the same idea. They show some variation from each other, but do not necessarily illustrate any particular improvement in grasp of either linguistic or organizational issues.

> (6) But in America we don't do all that stuff first. We save time for buying every day. We go shopping once a week and put it in refrigerator. We do not have to cook three times a day. We cook one time and save it. Whenever we need to eat put it microwave and eat.
>
> (7) I thing in my idea I not only save time for cooking and cleaning and shopping store. buying food. I don't cook every day because we are Not big family. I cook twice a week and use microwave, there are different way to get easy way food.

She fits in the category of students who are willing to reexamine, rewrite and add or subtract ideas, but who find it difficult to attend to detail. Table 11 shows which correction types students in Group 1 noticed and transcribed during Phase 2 while Table 12 details the changes they made in Phase 3 of the project.

Table 11: Group 1 : Types of corrections adopted by students in Phase 2, in rewriting the first half of their essay (n=5)

Name	Mech	%	Morphsyn	%	lexical	%	semantic	%
Lul	0/4	0	6/10	60	9/12	75	8/8	100
Safia	1/9	11	8/13	62	9/11	82	1/4	25
Alia	1/7	14	1/5	20	0/2	0	1/7	14
Ahmed	1/10	10	5/8	63	11/12	92	9/9	100
Halima	3/10	30	10/18	56	28/38	74	4/4	100

Table 12: Group 1: Types of corrections made to second half of paper in Phase 3 (n=5)

Name	# of changes in Phase 3	Mech	Morphsyn	Lex	Sem	Comments
Lul	6	2	1	3		
Safia	3		3			Same error 3X
Alia	5	5				(punctuation)
Ahmed	6	3	1	1	1	
Halima	5*		2	3	*	

* Halima did some additional rewrites in the course of the assignment, making her stages less distinct and her corrections difficult to tally.

Group 2

Group 2 represents students with a markedly high rate of changes transcribed in the first half of their papers as well as the ability to apply quite a few of the corrections they noticed in making related changes in the second half of their papers in Phase 3 of the project. Gabriel, Abdirizak and Mariam showed a particularly high receptivity and learning potential from the written recast technique. Gabriel was a unique case in that he invested more time and energy in all phases of the project than any of his peers. His initial draft was much longer than the others, providing more opportunity for error, for feedback, for cognitive overload and for growth. Gabriel also exceeded the teacher's expectations in recording changes on the second half of his writing, by taking the essay home and rewriting it, an approach that gave him more opportunity for quality rewriting and particular awareness of changes he wished to make. Of the 23 morphosyntactic corrections he made, 19 were changes in verb tense, of which 17 were correct usage of

the past tense where previously it had been either the present progressive or an incorrect form of the past such as *'I was drive'*.

> (8)After a few month I get a job taxi driver at this time I am survive m self and I am helping my family I was drive 13-14 hours a day.
>
> (9)After a few month I got a job a taxi driver. At this time I survived and my family. I drove 13-14 hours a day.

Most noticeable was his capacity to consistently recognize and correct a systematic problem. Although Abdirizak's efforts were not of the same scale, his 11 corrections also show a high level of uptake from the recast. Particularly the transfer of 5 lexical items such as the deletion of '*so*' and the addition of '*as soon as possible*' in (10) and (11) and the appropriate sentence starter, '*I thought it was…*' in (12) and (13)show a high learning curve and capacity to benefit from exposure to native written language patterns.

> (10) It was so difficult to me before. →
> (11) **I thought it was** difficult to me before
> (12) **so** I decided to marrie, so I immediately married my best girl which I choosed →
> (13) I decided to marrie, **as soon as possible** my best girl which I had choosed,

Mariam also was able to improve the readability of her writing. The amount of corrections she was able to make was enhanced by the fact that she actually rewrote her essay as opposed to merely marking corrections onto an earlier draft. She reduced the use of run-ons by shortening sentences and adding periods, as shown in the difference between (14) and (15). Throughout the essay she also corrected the spelling of the word weather four times.

> (14) Also the other season its good. Summer time its hot, but it looks like medium wheather about 65º – 85º is not too hot. Fall and spring too is

good wheather not too cold or not too wind it just medium not like Minnesota, so I like my country's wheather.

(15) The other season also good. At the summer time it is not hot, but it is warm weather. The weather about 65 º– 85º. it is not too hot. At the fall and spring also it is not cold or wind.

She deleted the phrase '*which means'* two times in favor of a new sentence and a better transition, including one time the use of the stock phrase '*We have'* as an effective sentence starter in (17) and one time the use of a semi-colon as in (19).

(16) The religion is different which means Muslims and Christians.
(17) The religion in my country is different. We have the Muslim and the Christian religion.
(18) About education also different than U.S. because in my country there is no school bus and no food for students which means for headstart, kindergarten, Elementary and high schools.
(19) The education in my country there is not school bus and free food for students; headstart, kindergarten, elementary and high schools.

Table 13: Group 2 Types of correction adopted by students in Phase 2, in rewriting the first half of their essay (n=3)

Name	Mech	%	Morphsyn	%	lexical	%	semantic	%
Gabriel	2/10	20	23/24	96	21/22	95	21/21	100
Abdirizak	8/19	42	12/13	92	18/19	95	4/4	100
Mariam	4/6	66	2/10	20	1/4	25	1/8	13

Table 14: Group 2 Types of corrections made to second half of paper in Phase 3 (n=3)

Name	#	Mech	Morphsyn	Lex	Sem
Gabriel	69	15	23	11	20
Abdirizak	11	1	5	5	
Mariam	Many+	X+			X+

+Mariam completely rewrote the second half of her essay making significant semantic changes that sometimes included and sometimes eliminated the need for morphosyntactic or lexical corrections, making her corrections difficult to tally

Group 3

Group 3 represents students who did not make many changes in the second halves of their papers and for whom the benefits of the written recast in its current form seemed

difficult to identify. Ursula and Basim were both students whom I noticed were not particularly satisfied with the recasts as a form of feedback. Both of them requested traditional correction earlier in the process and expressed frustration that it had been withheld. Basim had in fact received corrections as he desired from another source, an American colleague who had been red penning his work for him on a regular basis. Due to the prior corrections, his work was remarkably free of lexical, morphosyntactic and semantic error. Upon receiving the recast and a class of empty class time to process it, he found himself ungrounded and not knowing how to process the feedback, having come in with the confidence that it had already been dealt with. Ursula has a high literacy level in her own country, and a high metalinguistic ability grammatically speaking. Her writing, although not native like at the sentence level, is so at the paragraph level. Basim had 13 errors and transcribed three, the only three morphosyntactic or lexical errors he had. He had 10 mechanical errors, none of which were caught in transcription. Ursula received 8 pieces of feedback, 5 of which she transcribed correctly. She noticed and transcribed all lexical, morphosyntactic and semantic changes, but missed all three pieces of feedback regarding mechanics.

Unlike Ursula and Basim, Estella had a positive response to the assignment. She shares in common with them however a small number of errors corrected and a minimal number of corrections made during the third phase. She appears to be the kind of student who is so attentive and serious about her work that she already operates at full capacity in terms of keeping her writing edited to the level of her own grammatical understanding.

Table 15: Group 3 Types of correction adopted by students in Phase 2, in rewriting the first half of their essay (n=3)

N ame	**Mech**	**%**	**Morphsyn**	**%**	**lexical**	**%**	**semantic**	**%**
Basim	0/10	0	2/2	100	1/1	100	0/0	----
Ursula	0/3	0	0/0	---	3/3	100	2/2	100
Estella	1/3	33	5/9	56	3/5	60	0/0	----

Figure 16: Group 3 Types of corrections made to second half of paper in Phase 3 (n=3)

Name	**#**	**Mech**	**Morphsyn**	**Lex**	**Sem**	**Comments**
Basim	0					
Ursula	0					
Estella	1			1		

All three of the students in Group 3 already possess some self-editing skills, albeit dependent on a third party in the case of Basim. They had fewer careless mistakes than other students. Their changes did not tend to be as systematic as in the case of many other students and there tended to be less transferability potential in the changes. As a subgroup their writing represented already well-organized prose, an openness and experience of learning well from red penning. Their response to the written recast showed that they could not recognize their most common errors, mechanical ones, through simply having a cognitive comparison. It seems likely that some type of technique to draw attention to their errors such as highlighting, underlining or introductory instructions to look for the type of error would be beneficial to them. Such feedback, along the lines of what Doughty and Varela (1998) term corrective recasting involve an initial attention-getting phase to draw attention to the error.

Group 4

Group 4 is similar to Group 3 in that members of both groups made minimal amounts of changes in response to the written recast. A separate group has been created to acknowledge the different contexts within which this minimal response arose. Members of Group 3 could easily follow the recast, but appeared unaware of subtle differences. To its members the recast appeared identical to the original draft. By contrast, the student classified as having a Group 4 type response was distinguished by her inability to access the overload of information. She could not find the similarity between the recast and her writing.

Faduma appears to be an example of a student for whom the recast in the form of reformulation was not a good match. Her sentences were long and awkward enough that she could no longer recognize her writing when it was stated in the voice of a native speaker. She reported that she could not follow the reformulated writing and that she did not know where it started. She wrote on her evaluation, "I would like to learn slowly no all changes my essay." A modified recast that more closely resembled plausible reconstruction, in which her writing was responded to sentence by sentence as opposed to paragraph by paragraph, however**,** allowed her to ground herself in the process of comparing the two versions. Example (20) shows the recast which Faduma could follow, which is very close to a plausible reconstruction. It adds punctuation and fixes spelling and verb tense problems, but the word and sentence order remains identical to her original. In contrast, example (21) shows the recast that that overwhelmed Faduma, because ideas were consolidated and reorganized, in a manner more typical of a reformulation.

> (20) People may face many events that change their lives. Mine changed completely when I came to America. I became responsible and tried to get

> an education. One of the reasons my life changed when I came to America was I needed to take responsibility for myself.
>
> (21) My life, like many other people's lives, changed a lot when I came to America. Some of my changes include having responsibility and getting an education. Taking responsibility has been a big change for me. Although I had never worked in my country, I have worked hard since I have been here.

In the plausible reconstruction format she transcribed 13 out of 18 changes. She was, however, unable to apply any insights from those transcriptions to editing the second half of her writing.

Figure 17 Group 4 Types of corrections made to second half of paper in Phase 3 (n=1)

Name	Mech	%	Morphsyn	%	lexical	%	semantic	%
Faduma	0/2	0	2/5	40	6/6	100	5/5	100

Discussion of Pilot Study Results

The data obtained in the pilot study illustrate that ability to transcribe and transfer changes from written recast varies from individual to individual. One must thus be cautious in over generalizing the helpfulness or appropriateness of the written recast as a feedback mechanism to any other given group of learners, especially given the small size of the data set in the current study. Nonetheless some patterns do emerge which shed light on learning styles and levels and the capacity of certain groups of students to benefit from such feedback.

Research Question #1 asks what written recasts of non-target-like items pre community college students are able to notice in a 2 phased writing project, as measured by their ability to transcribe changes onto the first half of their paper. These data suggest that these students are able to transcribe the majority of morphosyntactic, lexical and

semantic changes from written recasts, through which one can deduce a similar rate of noticing. It is of note, in light of Mackey et al's (2000) findings on the lack of noticing of morphosyntacic change in oral recasts, that the noticing of morphosyntactic recasts in written form is considerably higher. The transcription of mechanical items is lower than for other error types, although the third phase of the project illustrates that the Phase 2 transcription rate is not a sufficient measure of noticing, since several students made mechanical changes in Phase 3 that their transcription rates would not have indicated that they had noticed.

A more fine-grained look at the data from Phase 3 of the project reveals that despite the low transcription rate that several individual students did perceive and remember mechanical correction without having transcribed the changes onto their papers during Phase 2. Three students who transcribed no punctuation errors in Phase 2, proceeded to systematically add periods in Phase 3 of the project, in which they edited their writing in light of what they had learned from viewing the reformulation. One must, thus, be cautious in presuming transcription to be a comprehensive measure of noticing. Transcription proves to not necessarily be a reliable indicator of noticing. The more notable documentation of whether uptake occurred in response to the written recast lies in answer to the second research question: **Research Question #2:** Which student transcribed changes are students able to apply to the second half of the same essay?

The clearest pattern that emerges is that half of the learners were able to notice and apply feedback from a series of related corrections, where they were able to recognize and correct a systemic problem. In this data set, this included focus on improved punctuation, improved verb tense usage and improved use of transition words.

Learners appeared to experience a sense of satisfaction in being able to recognize a pattern of error and subsequently make a series of related changes. The data reinforce the notion of selective correction (Ferris, 1999): focusing feedback on types of errors that students are working on is helpful since a pattern of corrections can become recognizable to students. The written recast also broadens the learning potential offered by selective correction, by leaving it to the student to identify which areas he or she is ready to selectively learn.

The data also questions the claim that reformulation primarily benefits higher level students as Cohen (1990) and Sanaoui (1984) have inferred. The case in Group 4 does illustrate that reformulation, truly restating something as a native speaker would say it, is too far a reach for some students, overwhelming them with input, while not reinforcing the effectiveness of their communicative ability at their current level. In this way this data corroborates that lower level students may not yet be prepared to access the learning potential available in reformulation. On the other hand, tailoring the written recast to the developmental levels of students makes it a pedagogically useful tool for teachers who have enough sustained contact with students to recognize their receptivity levels to feedback. The students in this study echoed the performance of Sanaoui's subjects, by showing benefit in their morphosyntactic development. By focusing feedback on the developmental levels of students, one is able to see benefits for both lower and higher level students.

The lack of transferability in Group 3 seemed to be associated in part with high metalinguistic ability for this group of students who had moved beyond systematic morphosyntactic or mechanical error but continued to struggle with appropriate use of the

lexicon. For these students the recasts that they received, which more closely resembled plausible reconstruction, seemed ineffective both for the instructor and the student. It appears they may have been ready for a recast that more closely resembled reformulation. In addition, it is also possible that a more traditional feedback approach may have been more efficient and perhaps more effective with these students, because the error level was low, the receptivity to feedback high, and the comfort with red penning existed. These findings can also be interpreted to reinforce Cohen's (1989) recommendations that reformulation is a strategy which will really benefit higher level students, for in fact, these students may be ready for a more style focused type of reformulation that would help stretch them in their lexical and organizational skills.

Overall, the written recast appears to have been a productive and engaging exercise for Groups 1 and 2, which constituted 8 of the 12 pre-community college students in the study. The process helped them identify at least one area in which they could improve their own self-editing skills. The written recast in this context proved to be a worthwhile activity for pedagogic purposes, and an insightful one for research purposes.

Drawbacks to written recasting as a classroom activity include, of course, the time demands upon the instructor. The written recast in its current form remains limited as a research tool. It cannot tell us which types of language patterns teachers might respond to using more traditional corrective strategies. Because each student received different input from the instructor due to the differences in the initial writing samples a quantitative analysis of correction types remains elusive. An additional drawback to this study includes lack of interrater reliabilityof correction categories.

Future research might gather more fine-grained data using a more tightly controlled study to identify which types of correction types students might be more likely to respond to. This might be accomplished by having a group of students all respond to one written recast and an accompanying original student essay and then compare what correction types different students were able to transcribe and later apply when given identical input from the instructor. Additional questions that remain to be addressed by further research include monitoring whether there appears to be long-term retention of skills learned through repetitive use of the written recast. This could be done by looking at students' writing over the course of a semester and seeing if former error types continue to resurface after being addressed through the written recast. Further research might track the acquisition and retention of skills through subsequent essays over an extended period of time such as a semester. Two levels of skills exist to be examined: 1) language skills themselves and 2) capacity to apply the tool of the written recast as a learning tool. Looking at the use of the written recast over time is particularly important given the importance of an instructor being able to gauge the level of recasting appropriate for a given student. When looked at over the course of a semester long exposure the instructor will have more opportunity to know the needs of his or her students thus honing in on the degree to which the recast might resemble either plausible reconstruction or reformulation.

Main Study

The main study was designed to track the long-term retention of both language and language acquisition skills suggested in the future research section of the pilot study. With the insights gained from the pilot study that transcription of changes does not

necessarily have a direct relationship with what is noticed, Phase 2 of the Study (which tallied precisely which changes students transcribed) is not addressed again. The main study redoes Phase 3 of the project described in the pilot study taking careful note of which feedback students appear to be able to transfer into their own writing and looking at retention over the course of a 14 week semester.

In the pilot study, 75% of the 12 students showed positive responses after exposure to the written recast through a single assignment pointing to excellent pedagogical potential worthy of additional study. A question raised in the discussion of those results addresses the possible impact of multiple exposures to the teaching tool of the written recast. In the main study students saw their written work recast three times over the course of the semester. This permitted the tracking of the extended impact of the editing changes made as a result of exposure to written recasts. In particular, this design enables one to determine whether the changes made on a one-time draft carry over to the use of that grammar structure in learners' subsequent writing. In addition to seeing how the writing itself changed, the study also explores whether students responsiveness to the written recast as a teaching tool can change over time; that is, can students improve their ability to learn from the written recast as a technique through repeated exposure to the technique? The main study addresses the following two research questions.

Research Question #3: How does students' ability to use the written recast as a learning tool develop through repeated exposure?

Research Question #4: What changes can be noticed in learner writing after repeated access to recast text?

Main Study Methodology

Participants Students in the main study came from the same context described in the pilot study. All students in the study were enrolled in a pre-community college class of which the researcher was the instructor. All students had a high school degree or equivalent from either an American High School or one in their own country. Each planned to enroll in community college, but failed to achieve a passing score on the CELSA reading test and were subsequently enrolled in a 15 hour a week Adult Basic Education (ABE) program designed to improve reading and writing skills sufficiently to pass the entrance exam into the community college.

The main study participants differed from the pilot study participants in that those students whose spelling and basic grammar needs were so great as to interfere with reading comprehensibility were not placed in a different class. Thus, the range of writing skills was greater than in the pilot study with more participants struggling with grammar, punctuation and basic sentence formation than in the previous study. During this study, data was collected from 17 of the enrolled 26 students who completed at least two rounds of responding to recast text and were included in the study. Table 18 lists all participants by culturally appropriate pseudonym, country or region of origin, gender and estimated age.

Table 18: Main Study Participants

Name	Country/Region Of Origin	Gender	Estimated Age
Li	Viet Nam	F	25-30
Charlaine	Haiti	F	20-25
Hussein	Somalia	M	20-25
Nasra	Somalia	F	20-25
Felicia	Mexico	F	20-25
Fartun	Somalia	F	20-25
Yasmina	Oromia	F	20-25
Nina	Oromia	F	20-25
Lul	Somalia	F	20-25

Layla	Somalia	F	25-30
Safia	Somalia	F	20-25
Alem	Oromia	F	25-30
Hibo	Somalia	F	30-35
Georg	Bosnia	M	15-20
Amina	Somalia	F	20-25
Hani	Somalia	F	30-35
Osman	Somalia	M	25-30

Two of the students, Lul and Safia, had also participated in the pilot study. Of the 17 students participating, 10 were from Somalia, 3 from Ethiopia, 1 from Bosnia, 1 from Viet Nam, 1 from Haiti and 1 from Mexico; 3 were men and 14 were women. Students were primarily in their early twenties. All participants signed an informed consent form prior to participation.

Main Study Procedure

The procedure of the main study was similar to that of the pilot study, with some slight modifications in the pre-writing steps as outlined here. The exposure to the written recast as a writing feedback technique came to the students in the context of having already spent 6 weeks writing in a weekly journal, which was responded to by the instructor. Each week students were given five questions and given the choice of which three to respond to. Over those weeks the instructor gave feedback on content and organization. The main objective had been to encourage students to regularly express themselves in English in writing and to write on topics of personal interest to them. After 6 weeks students were told that the instructor would give them particularly detailed feedback on their next journal entry, but that prior to receiving the feedback students would focus on the organization of their writing to make sure that the story was well enough developed to merit the time and attention to fixing surface details. The pre-

writing preparation for both writing and use of the written recast as a technique was less focused and deliberate than in the pilot study. In the pilot study the entire two weeks of the writing mini-class focused on the writing assignment for the written recast project. In contrast, the main study work with written recasts was conducted intermingled within a full curriculum of reading, grammar and listening activities.

Main Study Phase 1

Step 1. Students wrote a personal narrative in response to a prompt eliciting the story of leaving their country and coming to America.

Step 2. Students received feedback from the instructor. No corrective feedback was given. Instead the instructor wrote questions eliciting additional information in the margins of individual student's work or made suggestions of details to expand on. Students' requests for grammar and other corrective feedback were responded to by promises that feedback would be given, but that their writing was not yet ready for it. Their task was to create an essay that truly said what they wanted to say in response to the prompt. The instructor informed students that when the ideas themselves were fully developed the essay would be worthy of the attention of correcting surface details.

Step 3. Students were then given class time to revise in response to this feedback.

Step 4. The researcher then recast the first half of everyone's essay.

As in the pilot study, the written recast technique more closely approximated plausible reconstruction than a style-focused reformulation. (See pilot study for examples.)

Main Study Phase 2

Step 5. Students transcribed changes from the instructor's version onto a copy of their own writing. Students were also given a feedback form asking them about patterns they noticed in the feedback they had received. The transcriptions were collected and photocopied.

Step 6. During round two, once students received copies of their written recasts the researcher formed small groups of students pre-determined according to similar themes addressed in the essays. Students were asked to notice the first lines of everyone's reformulated essays, the phrases used to describe the writer's first day in the United States and the phrases used to compare two cultures. Students were given charts in which to record the language the recaster used to address each of these specific issues. A student might thus collect a series of sentences that illustrated several different ways to use language to communicate the same idea. For example one student might write, "Although in Somalia we worked 6 days a week, in the United States we work only five days a week", whereas another might have written, "In Somalia we worked six days a week. However, in the United States we work only five days a week." Students thus have the opportunity to build a set of models to use in writing other comparisons. This step occurred on round 2 of the Main Study only. The researcher had not had this idea prior to the first round and on the third round the topics were sufficiently more diverse to make it more difficult to organize and less rewarding.

Main Study Phase 3

Step 7. Transcriptions were returned the following day. Students were asked to reread the second half of their essays in light of the feedback they had received on the

first half, and to evaluate whether they could identify any changes they might make to the second half of their essays. Table 19 shows the steps used in the process. The drafting sequence is very similar to the pilot study with some slight variations. The pilot study contained a more elaborate Step 2 and also contained a Step 4 and a Step 6, which were omitted here. The pilot study involved the provision of more writing models during the drafting stage. In addition, the Step 6 listed for the main study, of small group comparisons was not done during the pilot.

Table 19: Steps of three stage drafting sequence used by students and teacher.

Phase	Step	Description
1. Drafting	1	Students wrote a personal narrative in response to a prompt.
	2	Students received non-corrective feedback from the instructor that focused on eliciting additional information
	3	Students were given class time to revise in response to this feedback.
	4	Researcher recast the first half of everyone's essay.
2. Noticing	5	Students transcribed changes from the instructor's version onto a copy of their own writing.
	6	Small groups compared recast versions and transcribed phrases used for particular functions. (Round 2 only)
3.Application	7	Transcriptions were returned the following day. Students were asked to reread the second half of their essays in light of the feedback they had received on the first half and to evaluate whether they could identify any changes they might make.

This procedure was repeated once each month during October, November and December of the fall semester of 2002. Between rounds of written recasts, the researcher tallied the changes made by students on a checklist, noting all changes that were made and whether they showed improvement and whether that improvement resulted in a target-like construction. The teacher explained the format to each student individually and answered questions about individual changes from individual students. Table 20 illustrates this difference between student corrections that show improvements and target-

like improvements. Deciding whether or not something was an improvement was not always clear-cut when the change was still not target-like. In the example in Table 20, the addition of the lexical item '*later'* is a target-like use of the lexical item. In contrast, although the '*easiest job'* is not a target-like construction of the researcher's assumption that she means to say "the job was easier than", it is an attempt to use a comparative that was judged by the researcher to be more sophisticated than the original usage of '*very eas*y'. Some subjectivity enters into whether certain constructions are improvements or not. When it was unclear to the researcher this category was left blank as in example 3. Whether or not changes were considered improvements was not analyzed in this study.

Table 20: Examples of tally sheets of changes returned to students

	Original	**Change**	**Category**	**Improve?**	**Target ?**
1	A few days ago I got other job.	A few days **later**, I got the easist job.	lex	y	y
2	I got other job. The second job is very easy than cleaning job.	I got the easiest job.	lex	y	n
3	After one year I looked other job.	I looked other job when I worked a hotel.	sem		

Prompts varied on subsequent rounds of written recasts, as students chose which journal question from a series to respond to. Most topics asked students to tell a story from their personal experience. Most students wrote on their journey to the United States for their first topic and on how their lives had changed since they had been in the United States for the second topic. Topics for the third assignment varied more widely as they were revisions of student chosen previous writings. Students also kept journals over the course of the semester in which they commented on many topics including giving

feedback on activities in class. At the end of the semester students were given an evaluation form to comment on the writing component of the course.

Main Study Data analysis

Changes made by both the researcher and by students were classified into four categories of change types identical to the system described in the pilot study. An independent rater was trained in the classification system and classified the change types on one essay each for three students. The interrater reliability was 97%. Students journals and evaluations were examined to identify their perception of the reformulations.

Results Main Study

Research Question #3: How does students' ability to use a written recast as a learning tool develop through repeated exposure?

Research Question #4: What changes can be noticed in learner writing after repeated access to written recasts?

The findings relevant to the above research questions are interrelated. In large part information on students' ability to use the written recast as a tool is gathered through observation of the changes in their writing. Overlap exists between responses to the two questions. They will however be addressed first individually.

Research Question #3: How does students' ability to use a written recast as a learning tool develop through repeated exposure?

Two major patterns of response to students' repeated exposure to the written recast emerged. These patterns are characterized by the ways quantities of changes varied between assignments. Response pattern A is an initial minimal response to their first exposure to a written recast, which increases by the second or third round. Response

pattern B shows many corrections of one particular type on one version and then a marked reduction in that type of error in the next round. Neither response pattern is considered superior to the other. They each reflect different stages and styles of learning for students both in developing skills in the target language as well as in developing skills in language acquisition.

Both reductions and increases when examined in context can be interpreted as signs of learning. Students may exhibit more than one response pattern over the course of the semester. For example, those whose response initially increased may have fallen again later in the semester. In addition, a student may exhibit one response pattern for one language feature such as punctuation and a different response pattern for correct tense usage.

The responses of five students were also not cataloged according to response pattern A or B. This does not mean that they did not show signs of learning, but rather that changes in the nature of their responses over the course of the semester were either not decipherable or difficult to associate with a distinct change in acquisition of language or of a language learning strategy. The nature of the responses of these 5 students will be addressed under Research Question #4.

The response patterns addressed here are distinct from the groups defined in the pilot study, because they are looking at different features of student response. Groups 1-4 in the pilot study showed students' responsiveness to a single assignment using the written recast as a response technique and were defined by the extent that students seemed to be able to benefit from that technique. In contrast, groups A and B are defined by patterns of response over time. They look at the relationship between

amounts of changes over the course of the three installments of the project and sort students by the ways that they changed as learners over time. Table 21 illustrates how many students exhibited each response pattern. Of the 17 students, 3 students exhibited both response patterns and 5 students exhibited neither response pattern. This latter group is shown in the chart as the Ø set.

Table 21: Quantities of Students Exhibiting Response Patterns

Response Pattern	**Characteristics of group**	**Total # of students**
A	Made more changes over time	(8/17) 47%
B	Made fewer changes over time.	(7/17) 41%
Ø	Small amount of responses/ inconsistent patterns.	(5/17) 29%

Response Pattern A reflects the work of students whose initial response to the written recast showed little receptivity, but whose ability to find corrections improved after more opportunities to apply the process. Over the course of the semester they show that they begin to understand how to access input and convert it into uptake from the reformulations. The improvement exhibited in these students is in responsiveness to the technique, not necessarily evidenced in their improvement in ability to use language. Table 22 illustrates the increases in corrections representative of those with A response patterns. A brief descriptions of these students and the ways in which they personify the A response pattern follows.

Table 22: Increases in Changes for Students with Response Pattern A

Name	**pilot**	**Oct**	**Oct (Take 2)**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Response Patterns**
Georg		0	N/a	4	N/a	A
Osman		0	N/a	6	N/a	A
Hani		0	N/a	0	5	A
Amina		0	N/a	2	3	A

Safia	3	29	N/a	N/a	N/a	A
Alem		2	23	10	10	A,B

Georg was enrolled in this same class for the fourth time, and subsequently re-enrolled for the fifth time at the end of the semester. He came moderately regularly, but rarely did his homework. He asked few questions in class and consistently did very poorly on grammar tests given in class. He was extremely inconsistent in turning in journal assignments. When he did write, his spelling, vocabulary and grammar were generally accurate, but his writing always reflected a lack of effort and focus. He didn't seem to have many skills for asking for the help he needed. Osman generally held a low profile in class. His writing was never long or elaborate, but the language which he used was generally accurate and reflected a higher level of literacy than many of his peers. As the semester proceeded he maintained 100% attendance and his abilities as a good and persistent student began to emerge. Hani, Safia and Amina came regularly. They all appeared to have a high commitment to learning English, but their low literacy level made keeping up in the class consistently difficult. Poor spelling and lack of punctuation were typical features of their journal entries. Despite much commitment and focus keeping up in the class remained a challenge.

Neither Georg, Osman, Amina, nor Hani made any changes in Phase 3 of their first assignment responded to through use of the written recast. Hani made none on the second round either. However after two rounds, Georg and Osman made 4 and 6 changes respectively and on the third round of receiving written recasts. Hani was able to make 5 changes. Safia's changes rose from 3 to 29 and Amina's rose from 0 to 2 and 3 on two

subsequent rounds respectively, but other changes in her writing style surfaced which will be addressed later under Research Question #4.

During his second round all of Georg's changes were improvements to target-like English. Three involved correct use of the regular past tense. Osman had a sentence which read, "*I didn't happy to change my religion because the religion give me the truth"*. After reading his written recast he both times changed the word 'religion' to 'culture'. He also crossed out his sentence, "*I maked me Somalia and America same to work*.' and also added a sentence, "*There are big different between my school and American school. My school I didn't have transportation and American school has transportation*." This sentence reflected the work the class had done in comparing in small groups the way the recast texts used language to compare items between two cultures. Hani was able to make five changes, two of which were semantic clarifications and two of which were correct insertions of periods and accompanying capitalization corrections. In short, the changes these three students made were not extensive, but nonetheless by their third try reflected an ability to look at their own writing and recognize at least one type of change that could be made. Safia participated in the pilot study and for one round of the main study. Her increase of changes from 3 to 29 shows a particularly successful acculturation to the technique.

Amina's changes in response to the written recast rose only from 0 to 2 and 3 changes respectively on the subsequent rounds. By the end of the semester, however her rough drafts had a noticeably different appearance due to an increase in cross-outs, corrections and adding of words reflecting an increased ability to stop and think about language and make changes as she composed. (See Appendix C) Although her changes

in direct response to the written recast do not seem to show a noticeable improvement, a broader view of her overall writing indicated that her composing process was making room for reflection on language form.

Alem had made only two corrections on the first round. This was somewhat surprising, given how diligent and successful she was in other arenas and how committed she had showed herself to be to her writing in particular. The researcher assumed that her lack of more response was perhaps based in the fact that most of the changes that had been made on her paper were lexical ones and that these would be difficult ones to transfer directly to subsequent writing. Alem had taken the revision process very seriously up until the point of receiving the written recast. She had already rewritten the whole thing at least two times. The researcher postulated that perhaps given the attention to detail witnessed that she had already brought her writing to the top of her own editing ability.

As other students began to get feedback on their responses to the written recast in the form of tally sheets of improvements, Alem was anxious to get similar feedback. There was however not much to show her as she had made only two changes. She asked for her paper back so that she could do the assignment again. On her second try she made 22 changes, of which 14 were lexical, 8 lexical and 1 mechanical. Nineteen of the changes reflected improvements. Her corrections included 4 correct changes from singular to plural and 9 changes from present tense to past tense of which 7 were corrections to target-like usage.

Although the corrections from the first round of written recasts make Alem appear to be similar to other students showing A response patterns, her case is, in fact quite

different as can be seen by the 28 corrections made on her second attempt on her first assignment. Her improvements on later rounds show her work to reflect both A and B response patterns. Her case provides a segue to illustrating the differences between the A and B response patterns as will be explained in the subsequent section. Two additional students with A response patterns and the ways in which their responses differ from this core group are featured in Table 23.

Table 23: Group A &B: Mechanical (not Total) changes

Name	Oct	Nov	Dec	Response Patterns
Layla	0	7	3	A, B
Yasmina	0	0	8	A, B

Layla and Yasmina are additional students who exhibit both A and B response patterns. The data from their responses to the written recast are charted separately because their A response patterns show up in a more fine-grained analysis of their mechanical corrections that becomes disguised when viewed within overall changes. Their responses to mechanical changes in particular are illustrated in Table 23 and their situations are more closely explained in the subsequent section.

Response Pattern B

Students exhibiting Response Pattern B made many corrections of one type on the first round and then made many fewer such corrections on a subsequent round. It appears that their amounts of changes were reduced because they had less of one particular type of error having eliminated the errors independently in their initial drafts. In other words, a B response pattern points to students having internalized language patterns learned from one round of written recasts and subsequently having applied these language patterns

correctly during the drafting stage of the subsequent round. Table 24 shows the number of changes made to a selected linguistic feature for the seven students showing a B response pattern.

Table 24: Group B: Corrections of one particular linguistic feature

Student	**Linguistic Feature**	**# of corrections of one type.**			**Response Pattern**
		Oct	**Nov**	**Dec**	
Layla	punctuation	0	**7***	**3***	A, B
Alem	Past tense	**14**	**0**	2	A, B
Yasmina	Past tense	**12**	**1**	3	A, B
Charlaine	Past tense	**16**	**0**	4	B
Li	Past tense	**25**	**6**	8	B
Hussein	Past tense	**16**	**0**	3	B
Lul	Past tense	1	**10**	**1**	B

Despite a slow start characterizing an A response pattern, Alem, introduced earlier, proceeded in subsequent rounds of reformulation to not only make changes, but also to show systematic improvement. She exhibits response pattern B because the reduction in morphosyntactic changes, in particular changes to correct past tense usage, between October and November reflected an improved use of the past tense in her first drafts of later work, thus reducing the need for so many changes in subsequent drafts.

Layla and Yasmina, introduced briefly above, also show a Group B response pattern. Layla was a student with low literacy who worked very hard, but whose writing nonetheless reflected immature handwriting, particularly awkward syntax, many spelling errors and a complete lack of punctuation. Although her writing sample submitted in October was one long run-on sentence, whose recast included multiple additions of punctuation, Layla added no punctuation in her first response to a written recast. On the initial draft of her second entry punctuation, not surprisingly, remains a problem. There are, however commas sprinkled throughout, usually appropriately, but often with only

one sentence per paragraph. This time she shows a nice and new command of paragraphing. When she responded to the second round of written recasts she added seven periods. All showed near target-like placement.

In the third round Layla had added punctuation on the initial draft, showing less need to make this correction post-recast, with her mechanical corrections dropping from seven to three. Her December corrections are difficult to tally, however, because she basically started fresh and rewrote her ideas. The writing is still convoluted, yet she appeared to be experimenting with where to put periods as they appeared in one place in the draft but in a different place on the rewrite. On the rewrite she also provided more context to her ideas.

Layla's work typifies the A and B combined response pattern because she showed a three-step progression in her responses. 1) She was not responsive to the need to add periods. 2) She then added periods in response to the recast. 3) Subsequent work had more periods in the initial draft stages. In short, she 1) showed no awareness of the problem, 2) showed awareness of the problem and 3) reduced the problem in subsequent work. This progression is illustrated above with her work in punctuation.

Yasmina illustrates another variation of a combined A and B response pattern. Her A and B response patterns came in regard to different language features. Her awareness of punctuation issues followed an A response pattern. For two rounds she made no mechanical changes and then on round three she added 8 periods. Her awareness of correct past tense usage followed a Group B response pattern, namely one in which a problem initially not addressed, is addressed. She made eight corrections of past tense usage in her first round and none in each in subsequent rounds, because she

had already used the past tense correctly. Her responses to reformulation reflected a selective attention to language features, each of which she dealt with at different times.

Alem's, Layla's and Yasmina's work and the reductions in changes, typical of a B response pattern, appear to be related to their incorporation of systematic change learned from previous recasts and perhaps an internalization of correct use of a language feature. Their work thus marks the transition to **Research Question #4:** What changes can be noticed in learner writing after repeated access to recast text?

Types of changes to learner writing have been classified into two main categories; 1) ability to master morphosyntactic or mechanical improvements and 2) ability to learn to use a re-reading and editing process. Profiles of the remaining students showing a B response pattern elaborate some of the ways the ability to master morphosyntactic or mechanical improvements occurred.

Li is a professional in her own country and has a high level of both education and literacy in her own language. She has a strong background in grammar, and benefits from meta-cognitive explanations. As a recent immigrant, she had had little exposure to English and struggles more with fluency than with accuracy. Married to a U.S.-educated man from her own country; she had access to a personal tutor to help her with her writing. Her progression through the course of the written recasts shows a textbook progression of someone successfully gaining command of correct use of the past tense in English.

Li's initial essay was a story set in the past, which was written almost exclusively in the present tense with a few incorrect uses of the past such as '*I was called him'.* After receiving a written recast from her first essay she made 27 changes, 25 of which

addressed the past tense problem. Of these changes, 21 rectified the problem and showed target-like usage. Among the changes that were not yet target-like were several malformed irregulars such as '*choised*' instead of '*chose*'. She was also attempting to understand how to address tense marking on a verb and its complement as in the change

(20)'*I don't see some people* ***ride*** *motorcycle*' to

(21)'*I didn't see some people* ***rode*** *motorcycle*.'

On her second essay Li showed a great improvement in use of the past tense. In simple sentences she did it correctly every time. She also correctly used the past tense marking on verbs with an infinitive complement, writing '*they went to meet'.* Complications arose when there were several verbs in a sentence such as '*when I went in the street, I met somebody and they always say*'. She also overused the infinitive in a construction with compound verbs, the second requiring an infinitive complement as in '*they work and to like to learn more.*' While she seemed to have overcome her omission of past tense, it appears that she was struggling to understand the relationship of multiple verbs in a sentence: when the infinitive is to be used and when it is not and how that might differ from a second verb after the conjunction '*and*'. She also began experimenting with present perfect as in **'***I have never know'* and *'I have never knew them'*, each used once.

In response to her second written recast she fixed a sequence of past tense verbs changing, '*After they went to meet some friend they talking, drink beer or go to bar club'* to '*…they talked, drank beer and went to bar club'* and *'They worked and to like to learn more'* to '*They worked and they did like to learn more.'* On another note she changed her consistent use of *'every people'* to '*everybody.'*

In Li's third essay 10 out of 11 uses of the past tense were correct. In her response to her third written recast she fixed a past tense that uses an infinitive, "*I wanted to learned*' to '*I wanted to learn'*, but the main focus of her response this time is in changing the future to the conditional, correctly changing '*will'* to *'would*' four times.

Li's case illustrates how the written recast allows a student to focus on one type of language error at a time, in her case moving from basic past tense mastery, to a mastery of past tense using multiple verbs in a sentence to a focus on the conditional. Each of the items she focused on in response to a written recast appeared to be incorporated into her next drafts.

Lul provides another example of someone whose focus on particular language items progressed over time and was gradually incorporated into her writing. Lul was an extremely dedicated student who shared the rare combination of a moderately low literacy level with excellent study skills. She knew how to read rules in grammar books, ask questions when she was confused and apply rules she learned. She used her dictionary and taught herself vocabulary from her reading. She achieved the goal of all students in the class: passing the entry exam for the community college at which the Adult Basic Education program is based, skipping one level of the program.

Lul was first introduced in the pilot study, where she added punctuation to her long run-on sentences after her first exposure to a written recast. Her initial draft of her next entry showed perfect use of both commas and periods and some experimentation with using semi-colons. Her corrections in response to her written recast showed the correct addition of both a semi-colon and an exclamation mark. She also made 8 corrections of past tense usage, all target-like, including irregulars and a 'used to' modal

plus bare stem verb, '*used to know'*. On her third piece of writing, Lul alternated the narration of her story set in the past correctly in the past tense, including correct use in negatives and in phrases with multiple verbs. She also used the past continuous tense correctly. She used periods, commas and one semi-colon correctly. There was not a single punctuation mistake. This time her morphosyntactic errors were that she did not correctly use the perfect tenses. After receiving her third written recast she made 6 changes, 1 of which was lexical changing *'California it is very expensive'* to '*California is very expensive,'* and one semantic change changing, '*Then the summer people put a short clothes*' to '*My first summer I noticed the difference that people wear short clothes*.'

In short Lul's work shows a progression on focus from basic punctuation to advanced punctuation to past tense usage to a place where she can make more sophisticated semantic additions. At the end of the semester Lul summarized her own improvement this way: "*My writing used to be unorganized before September, but now I know how to organize, how to put punctuation spelling and how to use past tense correct. I get the ideas from you how to get started, when I'm checking errors I always read what I wrote and check the error. That is how I write different than in September.*"

Hussein was a particularly driven young man whose desire for a college education and his willingness to work hard outpaced both the language and language acquisition skills he brought to the task. He loved the writing focus of the class, often writing long, detailed responses to questions, turning them in early and rewriting additional drafts. He appeared to have a difficult time incorporating focus on form type activities, while all the

time requesting more of them. His writing very effectively communicated his messages, but was also always rife with morphosyntactic errors.

On the initial draft of his first essay Hussein narrates a story set in the past and almost never uses a past tense verb correctly. He uses present tense or the incorrect form of the present tense '*we are talk'*. On first response to a written recast he made 25 morphosyntactic corrections of which 16 were in response to past tense errors. Seven of these changes were target-like corrections and 7 were incorrect uses of the past tense, such as '*I started worked'* or '*I was start worked*'. Two changes were inappropriate uses of the past; '*I studied now*' and '*I loved my daughter*' in a context in which the researcher assumed use of the present would have been intended. These seemed to come as a result of a speedy run through changing every verb to the past.

His second essay shows an inconsistent use of the past tense, sprinkled in with present tense and an experimentation with perfect tenses (*'I have been worked)'*. His response to his second written recast included 11 lexical changes and 8 mechanical changes. He added a lot of clarifying sentence openers such as adding, '*When I first came to this country*' and changing '*You have to find place to lives or find out how to go to school*' to '***First when you start new life first*** *you have to get place to live* ***second*** *find a job and try to go to school how to learn.'* This change seemed to reflect the group work done with first sentences. Hussein's third essay primarily demanded use of present tense. Several sentences, however, required the use of the past tense, which he did correctly in each circumstance. Hussein followed the typical B pattern described for Li and Layla of incorporating correct usages of past tense into subsequent drafts, although

his mastery of past tense remained in an interlanguage stage in which correct and incorrect usages alternated.

Charlaine also moved from lack of use of past tense to correct use of past tense between the first two assignments. After making 15 past tense corrections in her first reformulation, 14 out of 17 attempts to use the past tense are correct in her second initial draft. Her third assignment did not require the use of the past tense. Table 25 summarizes the patterns of mastery of past tense and punctuation by the 7 participants, who showed noticeable improvement in one or more of these areas.

Table 25 Group B Salient Improvement patterns

	Category of Corrections on essay #1	**Status on Essay #2**	**Essay #2 corrections**	**Status on Essay #3**	**Essay #3 corrections**
Li	18 past tense corrections	***All simple uses of past correct.*** ***** *Errors with infinitive*	4 past tense with infinitive	*10 out of 11 uses of past tense are correct.*	**1 correction of past tense with infinitive**.
Hussein	11 past tense corrections	***All simple uses of past tense correct.***			
Charlaine	15 past tense corrections	***14 out of 17 uses of the past are correct.***			
Yasmina	8 past tense corrections	*1 correct use of 'didn't + overuse of 'didn't"*			
Lul	3 periods added.	***All periods correct***	8 past tense 3 present continuous	***Periods, commas & Semi-colon correctly used. Near mastery of past tense and past continuous.***	
Layla		*Paragraphs,*	Adds 6	***Periods are***	

		commas used.	periods.	***used.***	
Alem	5 past tense corrections	***11 out of 11 uses of past tense are correct.***			

***Bolding** indicates mastery or near mastery of the linguistic feature achieved.

In addition to the ability to master mechanical and or morphosyntactic structures a second type of change was identified in learner writing after repeated access to recast text. This change surfaced most clearly among the students who were identified as the Ø set in Research Question #3. These students' responses to written recasts appeared to be small and showed inconsistent patterns. Table 26 illustrates the quantities of corrections made by each student categorized in this group on the rounds in which they participated.

Table 26 :Group C: Total corrections

Student	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nina	6*	3	1
Fartun	15	6	0
Felicia	21	!	!
Nasra	17	!	
Hibo	0	1	0

!=difficult to tally changes, as completely rewritten

A glance at the data for these students does not necessarily show outward signs of improved language use as a result of exposure to recast text. Nonetheless the instructor's knowledge of these students and their writing processes gives context to the relatively small number of corrections in response to the written recast.

Nina and Fartun were each excellent students who worked hard on editing outside of class. Fartun always had a set of sentences on her desk at the beginning of the class to analyze and rewrite with her teacher's assistance. Neither Nina nor Fartun had as large numbers of corrections to make in the formal post-recast stage of the assignment because they had already been applying proofreading and editing skills at the drafting stage. They

were each making edits that corresponded to the grammar levels at which they could function. Fartun wrote in October, "*When I write the next journal I try to keep the grammar and spelling. It can't be all, but stage by stage*." In her end of class evaluation she wrote, "*When I started writing I don't know what I start the topic and organized. I practicing more rewriting. I became organized about writing*." Describing her own writing Nina wrote, "*Yes it is organized. Before I wrote everything mixed up, not use past tense or spelling. After this class I write better than September*." These two students appear to have established a habit of rereading and rewriting that brought their error rate down considerably.

Felicia and Nasra each made so many semantic changes after they had viewed their writing reformulated that an exact tally of word level changes was not practical. They reflected an openness and willingness to the idea of rewrites, for which perhaps the written recast process gave them permission. Like Fartun and Nina, they seem to have developed a comfort with rewriting. They became willing to try again to express what they had tried once before to express. Given the common resistance to rereading and rewriting among this population, the ability of students to participate in these processes creates a crucial building block for them that will give them tools for improving grammar among other writing features.

Hibo was a serious student whose work didn't appear to really flourish with the written recast assignment. It appeared that perhaps Hibo's children helped her with editing her writing at home. It was also postulated that she had a harder time vesting herself in the reformulations because she was not as deeply vested in the initial constructions, having had them supplied to her and previously identified as correct. She

herself, however, summarized her changes as a writer this way. *"...now I notice my writing was unorganized So, I get the Ideas How you organize and also How to start sentences. I read again and again my writing and I get my error. First I check my punctuation, spelling, grammar tenses."* While a mere correction tally does not point to gains made in writing, her self-report is moderately articulate about being able to name an editing process that had been applied prior to receiving feedback in the form of a written recast.

Identification of the improvement of editing skills among these five students as a change in the nature of their writing led to a recognition that an improved writing process was also a visible change in writing for 6 other students as well. Hussein, Lul and Layla all self-identified their improved writing process in their own evaluative statements of how their writing had changed. Rewriting was evident in Alia's work through the increased presence of signs of cross-outs and rearrangements. Alem's multiple drafts coupled with her articulate questions regarding her writing also were clear evidence of an effective writing process. In summary, 11 out of 17 students (65%) showed evidence of using a writing process more effectively than they had at the outset. Table 27 summarizes again each of the 17 students' responses to reformulation regarding both Research Question #3: 'How does students' ability to use a written recast as a learning tool develop through repeated exposure' and Research Question #4: What changes can be noticed in learner writing after repeated access to recast text? In the chart an X for Question #3 indicates which response pattern was exhibited and for Question #4 whether the indicated type of improvement occurred.

Table 27: Responses to Repeated Exposure to Reformulation.

Name	Research Question #3: How does students' ability to use the written recast as a learning tool develop through repeated exposure?		Research Question #4:What changes can be noticed in learner writing after repeated access to recast text?	
	Response Pattern A	Response Pattern B	Morphosyntactic Or Mechanical Improvement	Writing Process Improvement
Georg	X		X	
Osman	X			
Hani	X			
Amina	X			
Safia	X		X	
Alem	X	X	X	X
Layla	X	X	X	X
Yasmina	X	X	X	
Charlaine		X	X	X
Li		X	X	X
Hussein		X	X	X
Lul		X	X	X
Fartun				X
Nina				X
Nasra				X
Felicia				X
Hibo				X
Total	**8 (47%)**	**7 (42%)**	**9(53%)**	**11 (65%)**

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In summary, all 17 students showed at least one positive indicator of improvement as a result of multiple exposures to written recasts, with 14 students (82%) showing at least 2 positive indicators of improvement. These outcomes are presented again in Table 28. The percentages add up to more than 100% because many students improved in more than one area. Six students (35%) showed mastery or near mastery of past tense usage over the course of the three assignments. One student (6%) showed improvement in past tense usage, but not enough evidence to indicate mastery. Two students (12%) showed mastery of simple punctuation over the course of the three assignments. Eleven students (65%) showed outward evidence of increased comfort with

rereading and rewriting as a part of the process of their writing. Eight students (47%) went from a non-existent or limited capacity to find or fix errors in their writing to an increased ability to do so.

Table 28: Signs of student improvement as a result of exposure to reformulation

Number of students	% of class	Accomplishment
6	32%	mastery or near mastery of past tense usage
2	12%	mastery of simple punctuation
11	65%	outward evidence of increased comfort with rereading and rewriting
8	47%	went from a non-existent or limited capacity to find or fix errors in their writing to an increased ability to do so
14	82%	showed at least 2 positive indicators of improvement.
17	100%	showed at least one positive indicator of improvement

Discussion

The third research question asks: How do students' responses to the written recast change with repeated exposure? An expansion on this question includes: What insight into the usefulness of recast as a learning tool do these changes indicate? The pilot study postulated a Group 4 who appeared overwhelmed by the written recast. After the first round of the Main Study, it appeared that 5 out of 17 students would have been classified in that group due to low amounts of corrections in response to the written recast. Within three rounds of receiving written recasts each of those 5 students had shown at least one indicator of positive response; either an increase in ability to make changes in their own writing or evidence of an improved writing process. None of them could have been classified as overwhelmed by the written recast.

These Group 4 low response students show up in the main study as exhibiting a Group A uptake pattern, in which students who appeared to show no benefit were able to show growth in their ability to edit their own writing. The identification of this group

points to the importance of trying the assignment more than once before determining that it is not effective for students. A latent period of internal growth seems apparent, in which students may be taking in input, but are not yet ready to demonstrate their increased understandings through output. This period of potential latent learning shows the importance of teacher patience in continuing to provide input despite lack of response. This growth exhibited over time may also shed light on Lyster and Ranta's (1997) observations that students do not appear to benefit from oral recasts, because they are given no opportunity for immediate uptake. These data indicate that lack of immediate response may in fact not imply that uptake is not occurring.

The absence of those overwhelmed by the written recast points both to the power of the written recast as a tool when used over time and of the importance for the person doing the recasting to be cognizant of the linguistic functioning level of the writer, so as to succeed at providing him or her with text that is truly accessible. The existence of a Group 4 or an overwhelmed group may be more a reflection on the instructor's lack of knowledge of the student's functioning level and accurate perception of the student's needs than on the functioning level of the student him or herself. Likewise the Group 3 participants identified in the pilot study who appeared to perhaps be underwhelmed by the process again points to the necessity of the instructor in recognizing the range of grammatical and linguistic complexity available within the recast technique. Students who do not benefit in morphosyntactic and mechanical correction may well be ready for work on lexical complexity, cohesion and style that a true reformulation could provide.

One notes the importance of the range of levels available within the written recast technique. In Cohen and Sanaoui's studies, the lower level students showed up primarily

as limited in their ability to benefit from style and cohesion lessons. This may be because the level of the recast they were given did not target the level at which they were developmentally ready to learn. They may have been receiving reformulations, when they needed plausible reconstructions. Under the more general term 'written recast', in which the degree of difference from the initial text differs according to the ability and developmental level of the student, the advantages of the general concept of re-presenting students' own work as opposed to correcting it become more broadly available. Each level of student should be able to benefit as linguistically developmentally appropriate.

The uptake pattern in group B, in which students reduced the amount of corrections they were able to make as a result of exposure to written recasts, points to the importance of not judging a low amount of text changes on any individual assignment as non-responsiveness of students, as many of their uptake changes may be occurring at the drafting stages. They may be showing less ability to correct their own writing at the post-recast stage because their increased grammatical understanding is already reflected in pre-corrected writing; the exact desired outcome of most writing teachers.

The fourth and final research question asks, "What changes can be noticed in the student's writing after repeated access to recast text?" The answers to this question vary from student to student. However, the prominence of mastery of tense usage as well as punctuation shows the written recast to be a remarkably effective tool in addressing these potentially thorny areas for certain students. The written recast also appeared to be effective in adding lexical items, introducing dependent clauses effectively and reducing run on sentences. It also was an extremely motivating writing tool for students, which

gave them occasion to take their initial writing as well as the process of rewriting seriously.

The evidence in this paper suggests that the use of small group work to provide the opportunity to learn from the written recasts of one's peers work as well as from one's own, may both maximize the potential of the instructor's efforts as well as maximize the students' opportunities to receive input focused on how to express a particular concept. (See examples p. 51 and p. 61.) The comparing of introductory phrases and of phrases used to make cultural comparisons used in the second round of the main study also appears to have been a fruitful activity as evidenced in the resurfacing of some of these phrases in student work shortly afterward.

The increase in self-editing reflected by 11 of the 17 students who seemed to show signs of internalizing an editing process may be the most successful indicator of the technique. In so far as the formulaic structure of transcribing errors and requiring rewrites gives the students experience with rereading and rewriting their own text, it may be crucial in helping students establish writing habits which by their very existence become a tool for practicing accuracy. It appears that the written recast can systematically help students establish a habit of rereading by creating a structure that walks them through rereading their own writing.

Limitations and Implications for Further Research

Limitations to the study include the small number of students studied. It also lacks a control group making it difficult to identify the specific role that the written recast may have played in the mastery of certain skills, particularly of morphosyntactics and mechanics, which were also studied in the class in more traditional contexts. This study

also gave students access to a tally sheet which showed their improvements, a step that might be unlikely to be included, because of its time consuming nature, when the written recast is not done as part of a research study. Nonetheless it is worthy to note that the students were motivated by this feedback and that the air of seriousness that it lent to their work may have played a role in their successful response to the written recast. Also a more fine-grained analysis of the role of the written recast might take into account the nature of the content of the writing on students' motivation. In particular, one of the topics of both the pilot and the main study asked students to tell of their journeys to America. While this motivated many, it also was an emotionally loaded topic for a classroom of primarily war refugees. Pedagogically speaking, as an instructor picks a particular topic to introduce the written recast as a tool, he or she must remain sensitive to whether the written recast appears to the student as one of enhancing their ability to tell the content of their stories or whether the content of the story might become treated not tenderly enough, as the writing assignment becomes transformed into a tool for focusing on form.

Further studies might track particular students even longer with a particular focus on those who were just beginning to open up to using the written recast effectively. Further research might also track the effectiveness of the written recast in a writing intensive writing workshop style class. Here students would have even more opportunities to focus on and be guided in their mastery of writing. In addition, a more intentional focus on small group work comparing reformulations and noticing similar phrases holds potential for both pedagogic and research purposes.

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Appendix A

Student essay (transcribed)

My life's changed since coming to U.S, because I saw a lot of things and corrections, so I got big change that means in my country there wasn't any economy, so their wasn't any job before I came here (U.S), so my life's changed since coming to America. However, in my country we have some things different to U.S those are wheather, food, clothes and transportation.

My country wheather is different or has 4 seasons; which means fall, summer, spring and winters. The winter time some years there is enough rain and the farmers get terrible, because if the garmers get enough rain he will lose his job. If the famers he didn't do his job every body get famous or hungry, because food (shortage of food).

Some state they do not get enough rain, so some year they had famous and U.S. helped them. even the animals too they were hungry and die. that means the winter time is raining and good, everythings fine. Otherwise some state will get famous. Usually everybody likes winter time me too I liked my country's winter.

Also the other seasons it's good. Summer time is hot, but it looks like medium wheather about 65° is not too hot. Fall and spring too is good wheather not too cold or not too wind it just medim not like Minnesota, so I liked my country wheathers.

The religin is different which means Muslims and Cristians. The Cristians religin has many versions, The Muslims religin has just one, but I don't know why the Cristians part a lot! However, I am Protestant one of the Cristian part. Also in Minnesota I got religin church too, so I am glad.

About Education also different than U.S, because In my country there is no school bus and free food for students which means for headstart, kindergaten, Elementry and high schools. Even for all classes the student has must pay for his school every months or once a year so the life of Ethiopia was very expensive, because the shortage of Economy. I hope everythings will be changed some day.
So my life is canged this ways! Thanks

Appendix B

Name _____

Congratulations!!!! Everyone who rewrote their essay did an incredible job of adding ideas. I wish I were here long enough to put together a book of everyone's writing. You all have good stories to tell.

I am trying a new way of giving feedback. Instead of correcting your writing I have rewritten it to show you how I would write it. My rewrite of your essay will give you ideas of how to use American English to tell your story. There may be many differences between what I have written and what you wrote. In order to learn from my rewrite of your essay you will need to compare it to your own. You will need to look closely to see what is different.

Directions:
1)Read my rewrite of your essay.
2)Read your essay.
3)Look for differences between the two.
4)When you see something that is different, use the red pen I give you to mark what is different. You may mark on either copy, whichever is easier for you. You may mark on both copies.
5) If you wish you **may** write a note about differences.
(Notes might read something like, "I forgot 3rd person –s" or "I needed present perfect tense). **You do not need to write notes.**

Example.

Student writing: Many things changed since I come to the USA before three months I speak only Somali now I speak Eglish also.

Teacher writing: Many things have changed since I came to the USA. Three months ago I spoke only Somali, but now I also speak English. *)*

NOW TRY THESE:
Student writing: When I was in my country I am living with my barents.

Teacher writing: When I was in my country I lived with my parents.

(Did you find two differences?)

Student writing: I am never eat pork in my country my religion don't allow it.

Teacher writing: I never ate pork in my country. My religion doesn't allow it.

(Did you find two differences?)

[i] The CELSA test is a standardized reading test in the cloze format in which students use a multiple choice format to choose appropriate language from a reading test. It is used at a number of community colleges in the Minneapolis area as the assessment tool for non-native speakers of English.